

# **Draft Environmental Assessment: Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area Maintenance and Equipment Building**

May 2019



**Region 2  
3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804**

# Draft Environmental Assessment CHECKLIST

## **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

### **1. Type of proposed state action:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) proposes to construct a new maintenance and equipment building. This project would consist of a metal-frame building and concrete pad. The structure would serve as the new work area and storage area for the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) maintenance crew that operates out of the Warm Springs WMA location.

### **2. Agency authority for the proposed action**

87-1-201, Montana Code Annotated. Powers and duties. (3) The department has the exclusive power to spend for the protection, preservation, management, and propagation of fish, game, fur-bearing animals, and game and nongame birds all state funds collected or acquired for that purpose, whether arising from state appropriation, licenses, fines, gifts, or otherwise. Money collected or received from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses or permits, from the sale of seized game or hides, from fines or damages collected for violations of the fish and game laws, or from appropriations or received by the department from any other sources is under the control of the department and is available for appropriation to the department.

### **3. Anticipated Schedule:**

**Estimated Construction Commencement Date:** April 2020

**Estimated Completion Date:** August 2020

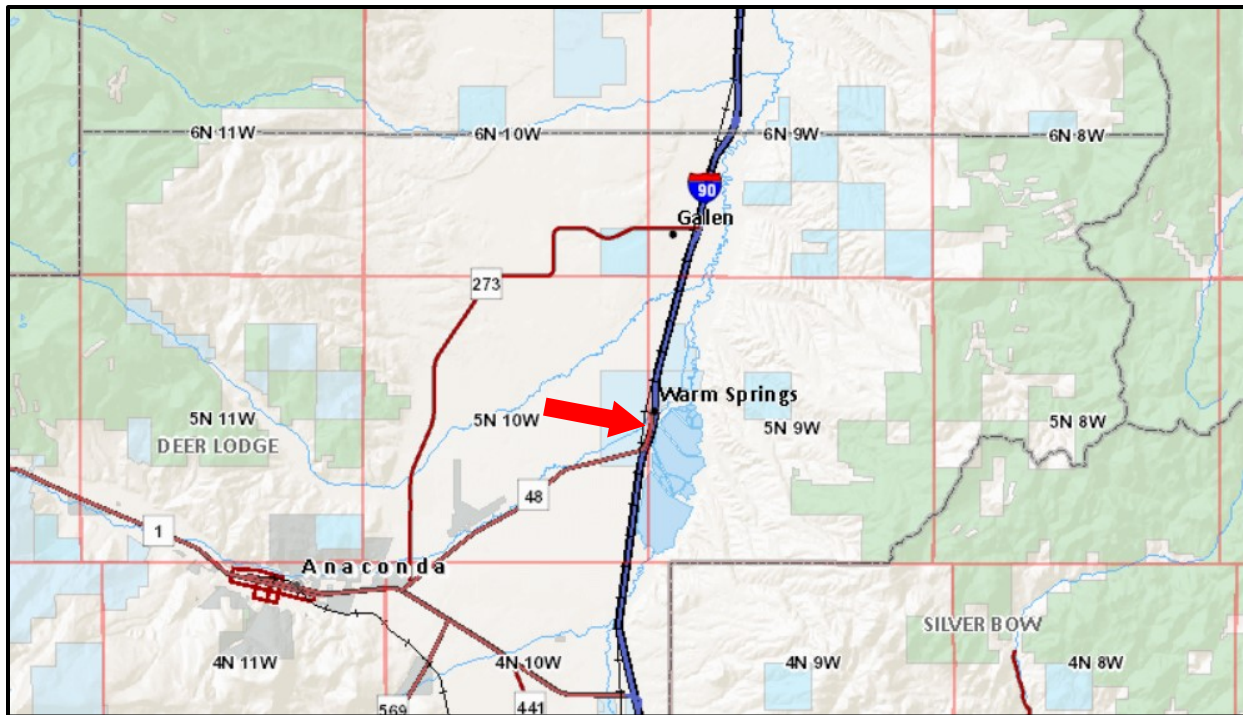
**Current Status of Project Design (% complete):** 10%

### **4. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township – included map):**

Deer Lodge County; T05N, R10W, NE4 of NE4 Section 24 (Figure 1)

### **5. Project size--estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

<b>Land Type</b>	<b>Affected Area (estimated in acres)</b>	<b>Total (acres)</b>
<b>(a) Developed:</b>		
Residential	0	
Industrial (existing workshop area)	0.5	<b>0.5</b>
<b>(b) Open Space/ Woodlands/ Recreation</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>(c) Wetlands/ Riparian Areas</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>(d) Floodplain</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>(e) Productive:</b>		
Irrigated Cropland	0	
Dry Cropland	0	
Forestry	0	
Rangeland	0	
Other	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.5</b>



**Figure 1.** Location of proposed maintenance and equipment building for Warm Springs WMA.

## 6. Permits, Funding & Overlapping Jurisdiction.

### (a) Permits:

- Any required permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.
- The consultant for the project will be responsible for obtaining permits needed for start and completion of project.

### (b) Funding:

Agency/Funding Source	Funding Amount
Pitman-Robertson (PR) funding	\$150,000
Habitat Montana Maintenance Funds	50,000
	\$200,000

### (c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
Montana State Hospital	Administers the grounds where construction is proposed

## 7. Narrative summary of the proposed action:

Currently the shop/work area at Warm Springs WMA is not large enough to sustain the growing maintenance needs of WMA staff. The current workshop is also in need of safety and general work condition upgrades. Also, maintenance cannot be completed on larger equipment inside the current workshop and is done in a dirt floored lean-to. Constricted driving conditions around the current workshop make it difficult to maneuver trailers, but a breezeway would eliminate this hazard. FWP proposes to remove two old buildings and to construct a combination workshop and storage building of sufficient size to service and store larger equipment, including a dump truck and backhoe (Figure



2). Major maintenance activities are typically completed in the fall and winter, which is best done indoors. The building would help secure maintenance equipment that would be parked in the storage portion of the building, thereby avoiding unnecessary weathering compared to outdoor storage. A concrete floor (monolithic slab) is a must for the workshop area, to reduce dust and to catch and help contain any accidental spills during equipment maintenance. A breezeway in the new building would also reduce potential damage to structures and equipment, and danger to personnel, by avoiding the need for backing trailers and large equipment into the work area.



**Figure 2.** Location of proposed construction site and the nonfunctional buildings proposed for removal.

The proposed structure would be approximately 40 feet in width and 60 feet in length. This would allow for an enclosed storage area (40 x 10 feet) and a heated workshop area that would be about 40 x 50 feet. The walls would be a minimum of 16 feet tall, allowing safe access with equipment. The inside of the workshop would be finished to FWP standards. The exterior of the workshop would be metal roof and metal siding. The new workshop structure would have 4 garage-style doors and a minimum of three walk-through doors. The proposed building would not bring any new uses to the site nor would it create any new environmental hazards, traffic, or exhaust upon completion of construction.

#### 8. **Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:**

##### **Alternative A: No Action**

If no action is taken, no updated maintenance and equipment building would be constructed and FWP employees would continue working with structures currently available on location. The current buildings proposed for removal are nearly unusable due to age and deterioration. Safety issues for

WMA maintenance staff would continue to exist due to the current deteriorating and outdated workshop environment.

**Alternative B: Proposed Action**

The maintenance workshop and storage facility would be constructed at FWP's Warm Springs WMA maintenance work location. The proposed construction site is currently developed and would require removal of two old buildings. Construction of the new workshop would be no impact any Montana species of concern<sup>1</sup>, floodplain, or water table. The proposed building would improve work safety and enable general preventative maintenance on equipment to be easier and more efficient for WMA staff.

**Alternative C: Maintenance workshop constructed on different location**

Constructing the proposed maintenance workshop and storage facility at a different location on the WMA would lead to various issues. A different construction site would potentially require a new driveway and further extension of existing utilities, at additional cost and ground disturbance. A different location would likely reduce outdoor storage capacity, currently required for maintenance materials and other items stored for FWP's Enforcement and Fisheries staff. A different location would also be less convenient, impacting productivity of WMA maintenance staff.

**9. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

The buildings proposed for removal at the construction site have been found to have historical value. Mitigation for removal of these existing structures would be accomplished in a manner consistent with the State Historical Preservation Office's (SHPO) guidance document, written specifically for the proposed action, titled *Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area Headquarters: A Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation* (copy available upon request from FWP's Design and Construction unit in Helena). Mitigation would include documenting and publishing information about these structures.

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<sup>1</sup> A Species of Concern is a native animal (or plant) breeding in Montana that is considered to be "at risk" due to declining population trends, threats to its habitats, and/or restricted distribution. The purpose of Montana's SOC listing is to highlight species in decline and encourage conservation efforts to reverse population declines and prevent the need for future listing as Threatened or Endangered Species under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST**

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative, including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environments.

### **A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Impact					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1. Geology and soil quality, stability and moisture			x		yes	A.1
2. Air quality or objectionable odors			x		yes	A.2
3. Water quality, quantity and distribution (surface or groundwater)		x				
4. Existing water right or reservation		x				
5. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality			x		yes	A.5
6. Unique, endangered, or fragile vegetative species		x				
6. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats		x				
7. Unique, endangered, or fragile wildlife or fisheries species		x				A.7
8. Introduction of new species into an area		x				
9. Changes to abundance or movement of species		x				

**A.1, A.2, A.5.** The proposed construction would involve temporary soil disturbance, possible dust generated from the construction site, and exhaust from the use of heavy equipment. These would occur within a confined area and would be temporary in nature. Upon completion, exposed disturbed soils would be seeded back to permanent vegetation.

**A.7.** The location of construction is within an existing FWP work compound and does not support any species of concern.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Impact					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1. Noise and/or electrical effects			x		yes	B.1
2. Land use		x				
3. Risk and/or health hazards		x				
4. Community impact		x				
5. Public services/taxes/utilities			x			B.5
6. Potential revenue and/or project maintenance costs		x				
7. Aesthetics and recreation		x				
8. Cultural and historic resources			x		yes	B.8
9. Evaluation of significance		x				
10. Generate public controversy		x				

**B.1.** There would be common construction noise of temporary duration associated with the building project.

**B.5.** There might be a minor increase in gas and electrical utilities usage, as the building would be wired for electricity and serviced for natural gas.

**B.8.** The buildings proposed for removal at the construction site have been found to have historical value. Mitigation for removal of these existing structures would be accomplished in a manner consistent with the SHPO's guidance document (written specifically for the proposed action), titled *Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area Headquarters: A Cultural Resource Inventory and Evaluation* (copy available upon request from FWP's Design and Construction unit in Helena). Mitigation would include documenting and publishing information about these structures.

## **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

The proposed action involves removal of two nonfunctional buildings and construction (at that same site) of a combination maintenance and equipment facility, to function as a workshop and storage area. There would be no impact to any species of concern, floodplain or water table. This facility would provide a safer work environment for maintenance employees stationed at the Warm Springs WMA. In addition to enhancing work safety and productivity, the new building would provide protection for equipment that is vital to operations on WMAs in Region 2. The direct impacts during and after construction would be minor, temporary and limited in scope. There are no known secondary or cumulative impacts of concern associated with the proposed action.

## **PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

### **1. Public involvement:**

The public would be notified in the following manners about the opportunity to comment on this current EA, the proposed action, and alternatives:

- Legal notices would be published once each in each of these newspapers: *Anaconda Leader*, *Independent Record* (Helena), *Missoulian* (Missoula), *Montana Standard* (Butte), and *Silver State Post* (Deer Lodge).
- Public notice would be posted on FWP's webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov> ("News," then "Public Notices"). The Draft EA would also be available on this webpage, along with the opportunity to submit comments online.
- Copies would be available at the FWP Region 2 Headquarters in Missoula and the FWP State Headquarters in Helena.
- A news release would be prepared and distributed to a standard list of media outlets interested in FWP Region 2 issues; this news release would also be posted on FWP's website <http://fwp.mt.gov>
- Direct mailing or email notification would be made to adjacent landowners and other interested parties (individuals, groups, agencies) to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

Copies of this draft EA may be obtained by mail from Region 2 FWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula 59804; by phoning 406-542-5540; by emailing [shrose@mt.gov](mailto:shrose@mt.gov); or by viewing FWP's Internet website <http://fwp.mt.gov> ("Public Notices").

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope with no significant physical or human impacts and only minor impacts, which can be mitigated.

## 2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period will extend for thirty-two (32) days beginning May 31, 2019. Comments must be received by FWP no later than July 1, 2019. (Note: due to a delay in publishing this draft EA, the original comment deadline of June 26 has now been extended to July 1.)

Comments may be made online on the EA's webpage, mailed to the FWP address below, or emailed to Sharon Rose at [shrose@mt.gov](mailto:shrose@mt.gov) :

Region 2 FWP  
Attn: Warm Springs WMA EA  
3201 Spurgin Rd  
Missoula MT 59804

## **PART V. EA PREPARATION**

### 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES or NO)?

**If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

No, an EIS is not required. Based on an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts to the physical and human environment, no significant impacts from the proposed acquisition were identified. In determining the significance of the impacts of the proposed project, FWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, and the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur. FWP assessed the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected, any precedent that would be set because of an impact of the proposed action that would commit FWP to future actions, and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. As this EA revealed no



significant impacts from the proposed actions, an EA is the appropriate level of review, and an EIS is not required.

**2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Brady Shortman, Region 2 WMA Maintenance Supervisor, Warm Springs  
Michael Thompson, Region 2 Wildlife Program Manager, Missoula  
Sharon Rose, Region 2 Comments Coordinator, Missoula

**3. List of agencies or offices consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Montana State Hospital